



County of Los Angeles DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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February 14, 2006

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
500 West Temple Street
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Supervisors:

**REQUEST FOR TWO POSITIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND
FAMILY SERVICES (DCFS) BUREAU OF INFORMATION SERVICES (BIS)
(ALL SUPERVISORIAL DISTRICTS) (3 VOTES)**

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT YOUR BOARD:

1. Approve interim ordinance authority for two (2) information technology (IT) positions – one (1) Information Systems Specialist I and one (1) Information Systems Coordinator. These positions were approved and will be fully funded for two years as part of a grant awarded to DCFS from the Quality and Productivity Commission (QPC) for development of the Electronic System for Suspected Child Abuse Reports project (E-SCARS).
2. Authorize the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to fill these positions with temporary appointments pending review by the Department of Human Resources (DHR). An action budget adjustment has been processed to include the grant funding in DCFS' budget to finance the cost of the positions in FY 2005-06.

PURPOSE/JUSTIFICATION OF RECOMMENDED ACTION

State law requires DCFS and law enforcement agencies to cross-report Suspected Child Abuse Reports (SCARS) to each other and to the District Attorney (DA). DCFS Child Protection Hotline receives approximately 140,000 telephonic SCARS per year. Our current paper-based fax cross-reporting system is labor-intensive, costly and prone to errors. The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) and the DA staff must key information from the faxed SCAR into their own computer system. The existing processes are costly and slow.

DCFS, in collaboration with LASD and the DA's office, applied for a grant from the QPC to develop an electronic system for cross-reporting SCARS. The \$2 million, four-year grant was awarded in August 2005. The development of an electronic system will facilitate rapid, secure electronic transmission and receipt of mandated reports between all affected agencies in the County, other local law enforcement and DA municipalities.

Two DCFS positions were approved for funding as part of the grant award and will be 100% funded by QPC grant monies for the first two years of the project and 75% for the last two years.

Approval of the recommended actions will provide DCFS with the staff necessary to provide oversight for successful development and implementation of this mission critical project. E-SCARS will expedite delivery of the SCAR reports and subsequent protective service responses, consolidate reports from multiple mandated reporters, provide case-tracking capacity, increase officer and social worker safety, expedite criminal investigations, enhance prosecution, reduce liability and ultimately save children's lives.

Implementation of Strategic Plan Goals

This action supports the following County Strategic Plan Goals.

Goal 5: Children and Families Well Being – Significantly improving internal operations at DCFS, LASD and the DA by coordinating, collaborating and integrating emergency response services for children and families across functional and jurisdictional boundaries.

Goal 8: Public Safety - Providing timely secure electronic cross reporting that will enhance child safety and reduce liability.

FISCAL IMPACT/FINANCING

The cost for the two positions is approximately \$80,727 for FY 2005-06 and \$242,180 for FY 2006-07 which will be 100% financed by the QPC grant. An action budget adjustment has been processed to include the grant funding in DCFS' FY 2005-06 budget.

The grant provides 100% funding for two positions in DCFS for years one and two of the project and 75% of the funding for years three and four. DCFS will redirect funding from within their existing budget in years three and four to finance the cost of the positions that will not be financed by the QPC grant.

FACTS AND PROVISIONS/LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

State Penal Code 11166 mandates cross reporting of child physical or sexual abuse allegations among child welfare agencies, law enforcement and the DA's Office.

The cross reporting is currently being accomplished through a labor-intensive paper-based system. A four-year QPC grant was awarded to DCFS, the DA and LASD to implement an automated system. The grant includes funding for two positions for DCFS that are needed to develop the automated system.

Although DHR will determine the appropriate pay classification for the positions, DCFS anticipates the need for one Information Systems Specialist I and one Information Systems Coordinator.

The Information Systems Specialist I will be responsible for the development and implementation of the program. This position will coordinate activities between departments and oversee the development of the entire E-SCARS project over a four-year development period. This position will be a highly skilled project manager, system/consultant specialist, design reviewer/approver, expert in software development, specialized in coordination between multiple agencies, skilled in interfacing between new and legacy systems, and proficient in communicating between vendors, user community, and management.

The Information System Coordinator will report to the E-SCARS project manager to provide staff support and be responsible for the coordination of tasks and activities needed for E-SCARS between LASD, DA, and other law enforcement agencies. This position is a high-level technical specialist that requires information technology expertise and knowledge of web application programming, networks and related technologies, with experience in coordinating software development projects with County agencies and outside vendors.

The two positions will be added in the FY 2006-07 Proposed County Budget as granted-funded positions ("N" items). At the end of the project/grant, the positions will be deleted from the budget unless justification to retain the positions is provided to the CAO and the department redirects existing funding to finance the cost of the positions.

All appointments to these positions will be temporary appointments; at the end of the grant period, the employees will be returned to the pay class they held prior to appointment to these temporary positions. If new hires are appointed to these positions, they will be subject to release from County employment at the end of the grant.

The staff time saved as a result of this automation effort will enable the department to either eliminate positions currently needed due to the non-automated process or redirect the positions to other critical operations in the department.

The E-SCARS project will be included in the department's FY 2006-07 Business Automation Plan.

The Chief Information Office (CIO) supports the addition of these positions and DCFS has discussed the positions with DHR. The CAO has reviewed and approved this Board letter.

IMPACT ON CURRENT SERVICES

E-SCARS will allow DCFS to: 1) achieve timely, secure electronic transmission and tracking of all reports sent to the correct law enforcement agency and prosecutor for agency responses to child abuse allegations; 2) eliminate costly paper/printing/clerical/manual processes and backlogs; and 3) better coordinate information-sharing and teamwork to protect children and facilitate case tracking and follow-up across agencies. The Sheriff and DA will benefit by: 1) reducing duplication of effort and multiple responses; 2) having a thorough and complete evidence collection; and 3) achieving compliance with mandatory discovery requirements.

CONCLUSION

Upon approval of the requested actions by the Board of Supervisors, it is requested that the Executive Officer/Clerk of the Board of Supervisors send one adopted copy of the Board letter to the following:

Department of Children and Family Services
Bureau of Information Services
12440 Imperial Highway, Room 501
Norwalk, CA 90650
Attn: Leo H. Yu, Deputy Director

If you have further questions, please call me, or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Manager, Board and Commission Relations at (213) 351-5530.

Respectfully submitted,

DAVID SANDERS, PH.D.
Director

DS:LY:PJ
YM:es

c: Chief Administrative Office
Chief Information Office
Department of Human Resources
District Attorney
Sheriff's Department